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what is held as most sacred; yet the responsibility for this belongs neither to the progress of science nor to true religious sentiment, but to a false conservatism, an irrational respect for the ideas and motives of a philosophy which finds it more and more difficult with every advance of knowledge to reconcile its assumptions with facts of observation.

CHAUNCEY WRIGHT.

ART. III. — THE METHOD OF HISTORY.

HISTORY, in the sense of a systematic survey of the progress of society, based on the principle of a necessary order of human development, is emphatically a modern science. The ancients had no history in this sense of the term, no "universal" history as distinguished from the history of single nations. They recounted the acts or described the fortunes of tribes and states, but had nothing to say of the human family. They knew no human family. They knew only Greeks and Barbarians, Romans and Outsiders (*exteri*), Jews and Gentiles. Polybius, indeed, called his history *Καθολικὴ*, universal, but only as comprehending in its survey of Roman affairs some account of the nations with which Rome came in contact. His starting-point is Rome, not man. No classic historiographer, from Herodotus to Herodian, has attempted a history of man.

In one remarkable instance, however, the idea of such a history, and with it, of a human family, is distinctly recognized. In the Biblical Book of Genesis we have the beginning of a history of man, but one which stops short with the mythic age of the world. Biblical history brings man to the building of Babel, or the period of greatest concentration, succeeded by disruption and dispersion, and then, dismissing the theme, confines itself to the single Hebrew line. Brief and fragmentary as the narrative is, these first chapters of the Bible contain more important contributions to the science of history than all the classics.

Christianity, by intoning the brotherhood of man, awakened a new interest in human destiny. The Christian Fathers manifest a truer appreciation of the unity of the race. Bunsen calls Clement of Alexandria "the first Christian philosopher of the history of mankind." St. Augustine's "City of God" embraces in its scope the whole human race as the subject of divine education, and distributes the ages of man in six days of a thousand years each, to end with the millennium.

Of the historiographers of the Middle Age the Western are simply chroniclers,* and the Byzantines, immensely important in their line, confine themselves, with one or two exceptions,† to the Lower Empire.

With the impulse given to the human mind by the stirring events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this branch of science blossoms into new significance. The astounding discoveries of the great navigators who solved the "ocean-secret," and lifted the veil from what till then had been considered the night side of the globe, the enlarged geographic and ethnographic views and the wider survey of human kind, resulting from these discoveries, combining with the recent "Revival of Letters" and the Saxon Reformation of the Church, gave to history not only a new impulse, but a new direction. No longer partial, local, it becomes encyclopædic, cosmopolitan. The writers of history task themselves with new and higher aims, evincing a new-born consciousness of unity and integrity pervading all the epochs and all the races and generations of man. The study of history becomes academic, and Torsellino's "Epitome Historiarum" is used as a text-book in the universities of Europe.

It was not, however, until after the lapse of another century, that the fundamental principle of all history was adequately stated. It was not till then that the discovery was made of a science of history. For this science we are indebted to Italy. The country which unlocked the New World was the first to

* Such are Eginhard, Paulus Diaconus, William of Malmesbury, Gregory of Tours, Albert of Aix, William of Tyre, Geoffroy de Villehardouin, Froissart, and Matthew Paris.

† Zonaras wrote a "History of the World"; Glycas, a "History of the World from the Creation to the Death of Alexius Comnenus"; Zosimus, a "History of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Honorius."

suggest the true interpretation of the annals of the Old. John Baptist Vico, a native of Naples, published in 1725 his "*Scienza Nuova*," or "Principles of a New Science relative to the Common Nature of Nations." This work contains the germ of many of the speculations of subsequent philosophies of history; but its principal merit consists in its clear and emphatic assertion of the principle of divine necessity, that is, of a natural law in historic processes and revolutions. Vico was the first to point out distinctly the analogies and parallelisms in the history of nations, and to show that the progress of society follows a given order; that nations have their necessary preappointed course of evolution and revolution; that human history, in short, no less than the material universe, is governed by fixed laws, consequently that history is a science, or that a science of history is possible. It is found, says Michelet, in his essay on the New Science, that nations the most remote in time and space follow in their political revolutions and in those of their languages a strikingly analogous course. "To disengage the regular from the accidental; to trace the universal, eternal history which develops itself in time in the form of particular histories; to describe the ideal circle within which the real world revolves,—this is the aim of the new science. It is at once the philosophy and the history of humanity."

From an examination of the languages, laws, and religions of different peoples, and a survey of the course of events in the principal nations, Vico deduces these positions: 1. Human society is based on three fundamental conditions,—worship, or the belief in Divine Providence; marriage, or the restraint of the passions; sepulchral rites, or the belief in immortality. These are what Tacitus calls *fœdera generis humani*. 2. Society has three great periods,—the theocratic, the heroic, and the humane. 3. The civil and political life of nations, so long as they preserve their independence, assumes successively four different forms of government. The theocratic age produces domestic monarchy (patriarchism). The heroic produces aristocracy, or the government of the city, limiting the abuse of power. Then comes democracy, founded on the idea of natural equality. And lastly, despotism, or imperial rule, establishes itself on the ruins of democracy, and puts an end to the anarchy

and public corruption to which popular governments give rise. Or, if that remedy fails, the degenerate nation, given over to anarchy and corruption, becomes the prey of the spoiler, and succumbs to a foreign yoke. 4. When a nation or when society has passed through these stages, and, unreclaimed by the revolutions it has experienced, still continues to decline and degenerate, it passes at last into a second barbarism. Faith expires, religion languishes, men grow brutal, cities decay, society becomes effete and lies supine until regenerated by some providential impulse from without. Then the cycle of history begins anew, and humanity repeats with new auspices its appointed course. 5. From the facts thus observed, from the indications of law and a regular succession in human events, Vico derives the idea of a great city of nations, whose founder and governor is God, a republic of the universe, the miracle of whose constitution is that through all its revolutions it finds in the very corruptions of each preceding state the elements of a new and better birth.

Since the publication of the "*Scienza Nuova*," the philosophy of history has found no end of expositors. Of the numerous works in this department, the most influential have been Montesquieu's "*Esprit des Loix*," Ferguson's "*Civil Society*," Lessing's little treatise, "*The Education of the Human Race*," Herder's "*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*," Kant's "*Zur Philosophie der Geschichte*," Fichte's "*Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*," the chapters relating to the progress of human society in Comte's "*Cours de Philosophie Positive*," and Hegel's "*Philosophie der Geschichte*." We are speaking of the philosophy of history in the narrowest sense, not of historic criticism or historic art; else would a host of names of equal and even graver note demand to be noticed in this connection.

It is now understood that history has its laws, as well as astronomy; that the course of events is a necessary, not a fortuitous succession, and the march of humanity through the nations and through the ages a series of progressive developments. The supposition is fundamental to the study of history as a science. If the course of events and the destiny of nations were governed by no law and subject to no method, there

could be no science of history, but only chronicles, registries of facts unREFERRED to any principle or ruling idea, incapable of classification. The study of history in that case would be useless, because it would lead to nothing. The end of all study is the discovery of law, that is, of spirit, that is, of Deity in the facts studied. If in any class of facts no law were discoverable, the knowledge of those facts would be hardly worth the labor spent in acquiring it. We read history to little purpose, if we read it only as a record of facts, and see in it no demonstration of Divine method. The facts themselves are not truly apprehended, unless we see them in the light of some principle or law which they illustrate. Take the battle of Actium, in Roman history. I read that the forces of Octavius met those of Antonius in the Ambracian Gulf, and obtained a signal victory over them. What signifies that fact to me? What do I know of Roman history, if all I gather from it is that Octavius was the better general or the luckier man of the two? The real fact has escaped me, if I fail to perceive its historic import. It was not valor nor luck, but historic necessity that triumphed in that encounter. It was necessary that democracy should replace an aristocratic oligarchy, like that of republican Rome. It was necessary that democratic anarchy should be replaced by an imperial head. Octavius represents, in that conflict, the Latin or popular element in Roman history. Antonius represents the Sabine or patrician. The internal history of the Roman Republic, and especially that of the previous century, had been a conflict of these two elements, the former seeking to disengage itself from the latter. The battle of Actium was the consummation of that struggle. With the triumph of Octavius, *qui cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit*,* democracy came to a head, Latin civility came to maturity, and in its turn became the matrix of its successor in empire, the Christian Church.

An objection may be raised against the doctrine of historic necessity, on the score of human free will. The conduct of history lies in the hands of human free agents. A glance at the course of events shows us that those revolutions which

* Tacitus.

have furnished the materials and given the direction to history have been the work of individuals following the impulse of their own wills. How, then, can we affirm them to be the operation of a law, or how can history conducted by free will be a necessary process? If one looks at the matter *a priori*, it seems *a priori* improbable that the destinies of humanity should be committed to individual caprice, or that able and designing men should shape the world according to their whim. But what is the fact? Free agency acts under given conditions, and those conditions are contained in the natural order of things. There is no more escape from that order in the moral world than in the physical. All the motions on the earth's surface, however arbitrary and contrary one to another, obey the parent motion of the earth, and are swept along in the spherul march. So all possible movements of the human will are comprehended in the providential sweep of the parent will which works in each. The contradiction between freedom and necessity, so perplexing in the sphere of private life, disappears in the large dynamic of history. There, freedom and necessity are seen to be different factors of one movement,—freedom the human, necessity the divine. The highest freedom is the strongest necessity, as in chemistry those affinities which are termed elective are precisely the most determined. Says Kant: “Whatever notion, in a metaphysical point of view, we may form to ourselves of the freedom of the will, its manifestation, i. e. human actions, like every other natural event, is determined by general laws of nature.”*

To the eye of sense, “the river windeth at its own sweet will,” but reflection knows that the valley through which it winds has been scooped by the action of unchangeable laws; and in human life all freedom that succeeds is free occupation of appointed paths. The course of destiny is the providential channel in which human freedom elects to run. Accordingly, the great men of history, the history-makers, are the “providential men”; they are those, in the language of Hegel, † “whose private purposes contain the substance of that which is willed by the spirit of the world.” They may not be aware

* Zur Philosophie der Geschichte; Idee zu einer Allgemeinen Geschichte in Weltbürgerlichen Absicht.

† Philosophie der Geschichte.

of their providential function ; they may not contemplate all the results they are used to effect ; the ulterior consequences of their free action may not have come within the scope of their design. The consequences follow none the less. Leo the Isaurian issues an edict prohibiting the use of images and pictures in the churches ; Pope Gregory repudiates the edict, and resists its execution in the West. What follows ? While Emperor and Pontiff quarrel among themselves, the empire splits between them, a goodly fraction comes off in Gregory's hands. Following the bent of his own will in his own ecclesiastical affairs, that prelate becomes the providential means of sundering East and West, never to be united again. Rolf, from the coast of Norway, bent on plunder, lands his pirates on the soil of France, and extorts from Charles the Simple a slice of his kingdom. Rolf has no prevision of a Norman landing on the coast of Sussex, and an Anglo-Norman kingdom, and an English House of Lords, all which the future drew from that raid of his, whose providential import was to give to the finest of the Gothic races a worthy field for their development.

Sometimes, however, the providential men, like Julius Cæsar, Mohammed, Cromwell, have shown themselves conscious of that Divinity which shapes our ends and subsidizes our free will in accomplishing its designs. It was no affectation or puerile vanity which prompted the first Napoleon to call himself the "Child of Destiny," but an irresistible conviction of a power behind him whose minister he was in spite of himself.

Assuming, then, as a settled truth, that the course of history is governed by natural laws, the question arises, How far are those laws discoverable and demonstrable by scientific investigation ? This is a question which only the future of scientific investigation can answer. The application of logic to history is yet too recent, history itself is too recent, to furnish a complete solution. All that we can thus far assert, with any degree of confidence, is, that enough of law is discoverable to constitute history a science, or that a science of history is possible.

The subject of this science is Man. To distinguish it from anthropology let us say, Man in Society. To distinguish it from ethnology let us say, Man the subject of progressive

development. We have then three distinct topics: Man, Society or the State, and Social Progress.

1. Man. To the catholic eye of history he is one. The science presupposes what all its discoveries tend to demonstrate,—the unity of the human race. We need not trouble ourselves with the question whether all men actually originated from one pair, or whether different portions of the globe have given birth to independent varieties of the animal man. Enough that man, as the subject of history, is one. The historic nations have descended from one original. If any of the races that inhabit the earth have a different origin, those races are not historic; they have no part in human destiny, and will finally disappear from the earth, or be absorbed by historic man. Man, as the subject of history, is one. The nations that compose him have one geographical, probably one genealogical origin.

Historic man was born, according to tradition, in Western Asia, precisely where speculative ethnology would place his origin. If we glance at a map of the world on Mercator's projection, we shall find that the portion of the earth's surface which lies between the thirtieth and fortieth degrees of north latitude, and between the fortieth and sixtieth of east longitude, is about the centre of the habitable globe. Here it is, or hereabouts, that tradition first discovers man, on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. From this natal centre we find him radiating eastward and southeastward to the borders of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, westward and northwestward to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. In later ages his course has been prevailingly westward, across the Atlantic into South and North America. And now, having crossed the American continent, and reached the uttermost verge of the west, on the borders of that Pacific which long since bounded his eastern migration, he has "come full circle" around the globe.

The where being settled, the next question is, How did man begin his race? Civilized or savage, in rude ignorance or furnished with science and art? This has long been a point in debate between ethnologists and theologians. The latter have taught that man's first estate was superior, not only in moral purity, but also in intellectual illumination, to every subsequent

age. Philosophy, on the contrary, maintains that the original state was a savage state, such as we find it to this day in South Africa and New Zealand, and that ages went by before the race attained to the knowledge and arts of civilized life. Happily, our subject is not burdened with the responsibility of this question. We have nothing to do with man prior to the period when history finds him, that is, the earliest period marked by contemporary or nearly contemporary records. The existence of records implies civilization. The word "history," it will be observed, has a twofold sense. We use it to denote the course of events, and we use it to denote the record of those events. This double meaning, says Hegel, is not accidental. It shows that actual history and written history are nearly related, and cannot exist independently the one of the other. History does not begin to be until it is written. A people has no history until it is sufficiently mature to record its life, until it arrives at that degree of self-consciousness which makes the recording of it inevitable. The intellectual life of the individual does not begin with the animal birth; it begins with the birth of consciousness. It dates from the period of reflection, from the time when the individual begins to act knowingly, accounting to himself for his action. History is the record of the intellectual life of society; it begins with the self-consciousness of society. It dates from the time when man associates in civil bonds under fixed and accepted laws; from the time when society becomes organized, with settled functions and mutual responsibilities. Whatever, then, may have been man's primal state, when history first finds him he is civilized, skilled in arts, governed by laws, living in cities, worshipping in temples. Of the times antecedent to that state, with their confused struggles, history knows nothing. The exploration of those unrecorded ages belongs to another province than that of the historian; it belongs to the province of archæology or fore-history. History is coeval with civility, that is, with the formation of states.

2. Accordingly, our next topic is the State. It is not with man absolute or man as such, but with man conditioned by social organizations, that the science of history is concerned. These organizations — monarchical, republican, democratic, or

despotic — are the stated conditions of man's development, the ordained method by which he accomplishes his moral destiny, by which, especially, he satisfies two pressing demands of his nature, — liberty and right. Liberty and right are both the product of civil organization, i. e. of the state.

Of liberty the contrary opinion prevails. It is thought that liberty belongs to man in his "natural state," as it is called, that is, in a savage state, and is lost or impaired by civilization; that liberty is older than civil society; that, being originally unlimited, when states were formed it was surrendered for the sake of the state. It has been affirmed, as a self-evident proposition, that man is "born free." That means, man is born with a natural capacity for freedom, and, co-ordinate with the development of that capacity, has a natural right to freedom. It can mean nothing more. Rousseau, unconscious of self-contradiction, declares that man "is born free, but is everywhere found in bonds." He should have said: man was made to be free, but has nowhere realized that destination. But Rousseau meant something more. He meant that man originally possessed a freedom which he has lost by civilization. He and others have imagined a condition of humanity, a so-called "state of nature," in which man was freer, and, in many respects, more fortunate than we find him in civil society. Since none of these theorists have informed us where in the present this state is to be found, nor furnished any proofs of its existence in time past, we are warranted in treating the notion as a fancy or a fiction. The term "natural," applied to any primitive condition of man, imaginary or real, to distinguish it from subsequent conditions, is a foolish limitation of nature, equivalent to saying that the root of a plant is natural and the blossom not natural. Civilization is the product of human nature; it contains nothing that human nature does not contain, and cannot, therefore, in any rational sense, be considered as less a state of nature than that of the Camanches or New-Zealanders. "If we are asked," says Ferguson, "where the state of nature is to be found, we may answer, it is here. And it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, or at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan." "If we admit that man is susceptible

of improvement, and has in himself a principle of progression and a desire of perfection, it is improper to say that he has quitted the state of nature when he has begun to proceed, or that he finds a station for which he was not intended, while, like other animals, he only follows the disposition and employs the powers that nature has given." "If nature is opposed to art, in what situation of the human race are the footsteps of art unknown?" *

The notion that primitive man is freer than civilized man is an error which springs from not distinguishing between liberty and caprice. We may dream of a state which combines what is best in civilization with all that is charming in aboriginal nature, but reality knows nothing of the kind. Reality knows only the civilized man and the savage, and the question is, Which is the freer of the two? Superficial observation may decide in favor of the savage, but closer inspection will change that decision. The savage is less bound by conventions, but is bound in other ways. He is more the slave of his passions, more dependent on occasion, more fettered by necessity, less master of himself and the world, and, therefore, less free than the civilized. With less of law, he experiences greater limitation. The nearer we come to savage life, the more we find in it of tyranny and violence, of the bondage of passion and caprice. The nearer we come to it, the more we find the condition of the savage to be one of thralldom and restraint; the more we find him bounded and bound. Ferguson, with one word, refutes Rousseau's fancy of savage liberty, when he says: "No person is free where any person is suffered to do wrong with impunity"; and Hegel, who defines liberty to be "the spirit's realization of its own nature," insists that, so far from being an accident of primitive man, it is something which must be wrought out, achieved, by a perpetual "mediation between knowledge and will." Right and morality are its indispensable constituents. It is true, society as such imposes restraints, but the necessary restraints imposed by society are merely limitations of individual caprice which hampers liberty. They promote that emancipation of the will in which true freedom consists.†

* *Essay on the History of Civil Society.*

† See Hegel's *Philosophie der Geschichte*.

The notion of an antecedent natural liberty surrendered to society, and of social contracts requiring such surrender, is a pure fiction. Liberty is not an original but an acquired possession, not an accident but a product, — the product of reflection, of legislation, of scientific adjustment, — in a word, the product of the state.

Likewise, the state is the parent and condition of morality. Morality as sentiment, disposition, faculty, is innate. Morality as fact is the product of law. Its earliest form, respect for others' rights, originates with the institution of property. But property in its first beginnings provokes the worst passions of the human breast, occasions strife and shedding of blood. It has therefore been deemed unfriendly to morality, one of the evils which civilization has inflicted on mankind. "The first man," says Rousseau, "who, having enclosed a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, 'This is mine,' and found people foolish enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, miseries, and horrors might have been spared to the human race, if some one at that juncture had pulled up the stakes or filled up the trenches, and had called to his fellow-men, 'Beware how you listen to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits of the ground belong to all, and that the earth is no man's property.'" *

But if property has been the occasion of strife and deeds of violence, it has also served to develop the idea of *right* in which all morality is founded; and though some of the virtues, such as courage, fortitude, and patience, might certainly exist without it, most of the duties, and most of the topics and occasions of moral discipline which society now furnishes, would be wanting. Most of the duties of social life, as now constituted, are directly or indirectly connected with property. Rousseau himself confesses that the first rules of justice are derived thence. "For in order to render to each one his own," he remarks, "it is necessary that each should own something."

Property begins with agriculture. To till the land it was necessary to enclose it. From tillage for the use of the tribe of land belonging to the tribe, such as we still find at certain

* Rousseau, Sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les Hommes.

stages of savage life, the transition was easy and natural to tillage for private use, the fruits and the land being both the property of the tiller.

The relation of agriculture to civil law and the moral well-being of society was represented by the Greeks in the fable of Demeter, the mythical goddess of agriculture, who was called *Θεσμοφόρος*, a law-bringer. An ancient cameo represents her as accompanying Triptolemus, the planter, in his tour around the earth. She exhibits a scroll containing a code of laws, while Triptolemus scatters wheat-seed. Hebrew tradition has embodied the same idea in the story of Cain, the first tiller of the ground, who is also the first city-builder and civilizer.

And not only by the institution of property which it authorizes and protects, and around which cluster so many motives and obligations to virtue, but also by establishing stricter relations between man and man, by civil jurisprudence making the moral sense of the wisest the rule for all, and more especially by maintaining the sanctity of wedded life, — parent and nurse of domestic virtues, — the state develops the moral life of society. If, then, and so far as, man has a moral calling to fulfil in this world, he belongs to the state and the state to him. States are at once the theme and the organ of history.

3. Our next and last topic is Social Progress. Man is the subject of progressive development. The world's history is not an aimless succession of events, a heap of facts fanned together by the flight of time, as the wind piles sand-drifts in the desert, but a process and a growth. The ages are genetically as well as chronologically related. The succession of events is rational; they follow each other by a necessary order in such wise that one is the exponent of another, and all are moments of one process. We say, then, that as civil society is the topic, so progress is the method of history. In saying this we pronounce no judgment on the question of man's perfectibility and final perfection. We assert nothing as to the ultimate destiny of the race, whether the consummation of history is to be the perfection of society, according to the visions of the millennarians, or whether it is to be the utter dissolution of society by the action of some remediless evil. These are ques-

tions as to which history may aid us in forming an opinion, but which history thus far is incompetent to decide. But surveying the past and present of society, we see such evidence of progress hitherto as warrants us in assuming — since some aim and purpose must be assumed to make history intelligible — that progress is that aim and purpose. We postulate progress as the key to history, as the mathematician uses an hypothetical number in determining an unknown quantity.

Progress in what and whitherward? Progress in liberty, answers Hegel, — progress first in the idea and then in the thing. This progress, according to him, has three stages, dividing the world's history into three epochs, — the period of the Oriental nations, when only one was allowed to be free; the period of Greek and Roman civilization, when freedom was accorded to many; and lastly, the period of the Germanic nations, when freedom is seen to be the rightful property of all. Instead of liberty, let us say progress in social organization; a more comprehensive interest, of which liberty is one element among many. Progress in social union and toward a state in which that union shall be complete, in which nationalities shall no longer divide mankind, when the human family shall consciously unite in one organic whole, a state combining the greatest freedom of the individual with the greatest compactness of social union, and securing to all the members of the common weal the greatest possible advantage in their connection with each other. This destination is at present strictly hypothetical. The immeasurable future alone can verify it. It is rendered probable, however, by the course of events thus far, of which it furnishes the most satisfactory solution. According to this view, every epoch of human history is a new stage of social development; every state a fresh experiment in social organization; and every historic revolution, exposing the inadequacy of each former state, inaugurates a new.

The condition of all development is antagonism. Nothing grows without resistance, without opposition of contrary elements. Society is no exception to the universal law. There, too, is a perpetual conflict of opposing forces, bursting often into open war.

War is a normal crisis in human affairs, and must, there-

fore, occupy a large share in the world's annals. Judged from the point of view of Christian ethics, it presents solely the aspect of a moral evil, and incurs unreserved condemnation. So far as war is the product of individual volition and design, so far as it originates in or enkindles conscious malevolent passion, it bears this character so distinctly and so appallingly, that the moral view becomes paramount and excludes every other. But war is not always, seldom indeed, on both sides, the product of malevolent passions; and the moral aspect of war is not the only one to be considered. It has its objective, providential side, which demands the attention of the philosophic historian. The same divine Teacher, who inculcated peace in his precepts, acknowledges the historic necessity of war, when he says, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword." Wars differ widely in their moral character, according to the purposes of those who engage in them. There are wicked wars of vengeance and ambition, and there are also righteous wars of self-defence. There are idle wars of passion and caprice, and there are necessary wars of antagonist races, and conflicting ideas, principles, religions. The Persian war to the Greeks was a holy war, — a war of liberty, which decided the destiny of Hellenic civilization. On the other hand, the Peloponnesian war was an idle war of rivalry, which decided nothing, but proved finally ruinous to all the states engaged in it, and prepared the way for the downfall of Greece. The Thirty Years' War, in the seventeenth century, was a necessary war of principles, which decided for the most intellectual portion of Europe the momentous question of the right of private judgment. But the Seven Years' War of the eighteenth century was a foolish war of princely ambition and princely spleen, which cost Europe over a million of lives, and secured to Austria, the aggressor in that conflict, none of the prizes for which she had contended.

Besides this antagonism of contrary elements, the progress of society is further conditioned by a principle of alternation within itself which causes it to swing between opposite attractions, or to gyrate around them as around the foci of an ellipse, and which makes the development of humanity a series of revolutions, instead of a uniform movement in one direction. Hu-

manity gains something with each revolution. Each lands society on a higher plane, and so the course of history becomes a *spiral* movement, at once revolutionary and progressive. There is a periodicity in the alternations of society, a regular recurrence of the same phases, which indicates a law whose action is calculable.

An instance of this periodicity is the regular recurrence of periods of migration, which succeed each other at stated intervals in the world's history, in conformity with a law of development inherent in society. There never was an age when migration entirely ceased, but we may distinguish certain epochs in which it has proceeded with special activity. And these epochs we shall find to be the natural product of the social developments which preceded them. The dispersion of the builders of Babel, in Biblical history, indicates the commencement of one of these periods of migration, which seems to have been a necessary reaction on a period of immature concentration, when, in Biblical phrase, "the whole earth was of one speech and one language," and when a city intended to be a centre of consolidation for the human race was projected on the plain of Shinar. This migration may be supposed to have covered a period of five hundred years. The next occurs after an interval of five centuries, about two thousand years before the Christian era, and continues, with intermissions and fluctuations, and different degrees of activity, for a thousand years. This great evolution, or series of evolutions, which colonized Asia Minor, Phœnicia, Palestine, Greece, Italy, and the Grecian Archipelago, appears to have been a reaction against the excessive spiritualism of the old Asiatic politics. It was followed by a thousand years in which the concentrative tendency again predominates, and migration, with occasional exceptions, ceases. Then, again, the excess of sensualism in Greek and Roman civilization encountered a reaction in Christianity, and Christianity required new races and new regions in and through which to develop its ideas. And now begins a new exodus from the North, by which Europe is flooded with the German and Scandinavian races, and which, with brief interruptions, occupies another term of nearly a thousand years. The next five centuries are consumed in consolidating the European

monarchies, sometimes in antagonism, sometimes in harmony, but always within the bands of the Church of Rome. Then Church and State become oppressive; the human mind, new-quickened by the recently invented art of printing, reacts on ecclesiastical tradition, reacts on civil oppression, reacts on feudal privilege; a new-found continent invites adventure, and simultaneously with the Protestant Reformation inaugurates the last of the migratory epochs now in progress.

In accordance with this outline, instead of the usual division of history into ancient, mediæval, and modern, a more philosophic arrangement will distinguish four great periods, the Asiatic, including the early African, the Greco-Roman, the Germanic, and the American. Of these the first and the third may be subdivided into an earlier and later Asiatic and Germanic.

Another example of periodicity in history is the alternation of the positive and negative forces of the mind, imagination and reflection. The old Asiatic civilization discovers in every province of social life, and in all the action of the human mind, the predominance of imagination. Life is overshadowed by huge superstitions; all is prodigious, titanic,—colossal temples, colossal idols, in which the monstrous predominates over the beautiful and humane. Everywhere mountainous theocracies piled upon poor humanity, absorbing and crystallizing its best juices. The institutions of society rise frowning and pitiless like stranded icebergs, while society itself, a scarcely perceptible stream, creeps lazily out from beneath. In secular or Japhetic history, the Persian war with the Greeks marks the boundary line of this era. When Themistocles, by tampering with the priests at Delphi, could bend the oracle in accordance with his plans, the despotism of faith and fate had ceased for Greece. The secular element thenceforth asserts itself in civil life. Reflection encounters Imagination in the Gulf of Salamis, and puts a limit to his sway. There is no excess as yet of the former faculty, but a happy equilibrium between the two. Then appeared that miracle of Greek and Roman culture which history is never weary of portraying. Then the world's genius awoke and lifted up the hands which had hung down and opened the long silent lips. Then was the blossom

time of art and song and philosophy and science ; the age of the Parthenon, of the Apollo-Belvedere, of Sophocles and Plato, followed, before its light had utterly gone out, by the age of Cicero and the first Cæsar, and the great Augustan age of Latin civility and letters.

But now the negative power acquires a disproportionate ascendancy, imagination grows torpid, art and religion decline, materialism becomes rampant, all truth and reverence depart out of life. The poets of Alexandria employ themselves with shaping verses into eggs and axes. Lucian of Samosata has turned the Pantheon into a cenotaph. Plutarch inquires " why the oracles cease to give answers," and a voice from the island of Paxos proclaims, " Great Pan is dead."

" Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving,
No nightly trance or breathed spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell."

The fire is gone out on the altar, the marble sleeps in the quarry. Come! Longobards and Franks, from the depths of the Odenwald and the Black Forest, — come, pour your fresh life into withered humanity, revive the perished world or bury it!

The age of reflection ends, and a new era of despotic imagination begins ; another long cycle wherein the huge and grotesque prevails over the beautiful and just. Again the portentous misgrowths of time. Farewell to letters and science and beautiful works of art.

" Now entertain conjecture of a time
When creeping murmur and the poring dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe."

The world's stage is cleared for a new act of the great drama. The actors are harnessed warriors with closed visors and scarlet priests. The old decorations, the storied friezes and Corinthian capitals, are replaced by the feudal castle, that, perched on a cliff at the angle of the river, seems a continuation of the rock itself, wrought by some freak of nature into pinnacles and parapets. In the valley below the symbol of penal torture is displayed in the cruciform church. The age of the Argonauts

reappears in the Crusades. Europe hurls herself upon Asia. The East and the West contend for the prize of the Holy Land.

Such was life in those centuries, wild, monstrous, extreme in devotion and in arms.

“Der Mönch und die Nonne zergeisselten sich
Der eiserne Ritter turnierte.”

Again there was a day when the empire of imagination received a check, and impassable limits were set to its sway. And this time the change was effected by the pen instead of the sword. And the agent was a German Professor of Philosophy. The birthday of the new era was the 31st October, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed to the church at Wittenberg his ninety-five propositions which reinstated reason and conscience in their long-suppressed rights, opened an irreparable breach between the Roman and the Saxon mind, and initiated the second age of reflection, which has not yet expired, and which comprises the great names of modern literature and science, from Galileo to Humboldt, from Shakespeare to Goethe.

Such is the method of history. Progress by alternation, by conflict, by revolution,—always progress. These are the steps by which Humanity moves in its foreordained path, advancing, not simultaneously in all its faculties and members, but in one or another part forever advancing. To what result and final consummation of its course it is not in the Muse of History to predict, until perhaps some thousands of years have been added to her age,

“And old Experience do attain
To something of prophetic strain.”

FREDERIC H. HEDGE.